

**BEFORE THE TENNESSEE REGULATORY AUTHORITY**

**NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE**

**April 7, 2003**

<b>IN RE:</b>	)	
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<b>UNITED WAY OF GREATER CHATTANOOGA'S</b>	)	<b>DOCKET NO. 02-00784</b>
<b>PETITION TO PROVIDE 211 INFORMATION</b>	)	
<b>AND REFERRAL SERVICES TO THE CITY OF</b>	)	
<b>CHATTANOOGA AND THE SURROUNDING</b>	)	
<b>REGION</b>	)	

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**ORDER APPROVING ALLOCATION OF N11 NUMBER (211)  
TO UNITED WAY OF GREATER CHATTANOOGA**

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This matter came before Director Deborah Taylor Tate, Director Pat Miller, and Director Ron Jones of the Tennessee Regulatory Authority (the "Authority" or "TRA"), the voting panel assigned to this docket, at the regularly scheduled Authority Conference held on March 17, 2003, for consideration of the request of United Way of Greater Chattanooga ("United Way") to Provide 211 information and referral services to the City of Chattanooga and the surrounding region ("Request"). United Way filed the Request with the Authority on July 16, 2002, seeking the assignment of a 211 dialing code to its First Call for Help program which is a part of United Way's Center for Nonprofits.

**Background**

In 1992 the Tennessee Public Service Commission ("TPSC"), the predecessor agency to the TRA, received numerous petitions concerning the use of N11 dialing codes.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the TPSC decided to open Docket Number 92-01382 to address the allocation of those numbers including

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<sup>1</sup> "Abbreviated dialing codes enable the caller to connect to a location in the network that otherwise would be accessible only via a seven or ten-digit telephone number. The network must be pre-programmed to translate the three-digit code into the appropriate seven or ten-digit telephone number and route the call accordingly. Among abbreviated dialing arrangements, N11 codes are three-digit codes of which the first digit can be any digit other than 1 or 0, and the last two digits are both 1." *In re: Petition by the United States Department of Transportation for Assignment of an Abbreviated Dialing Code (N11) to Access Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Services Nationwide; Request by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems, United Way of America, United Way 211 (Atlanta, Georgia), United Way of Connecticut, Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services, Inc., and Texas I&R Network for Assignment of 211 Dialing Code; The Use of N11 Codes and Other Abbreviated Dialing Arrangements*, FCC 00-256 (Third Report and Order and Order on Reconsideration) 15 F.C.C.R. 16,753, ¶ 3 (July 31, 2000) (hereinafter *Third Report and Order*).

allocation of the 211 number. This Docket resulted in the TPSC's Interim Order which was issued on October 20, 1993, and which set forth criteria for review of petitions for allocation of N11 numbers. These criteria include: (1) the overall financial fitness of the applicant; (2) the technical ability and willingness of the applicant to provide the service on a permanent and continuous basis; (3) the ability and willingness of the applicant to abide by applicable TPSC rules and policies; (4) the rates, services and collection practices to be utilized by the applicant; (5) the extent and duration of the applicant's service to the local community; (6) anticipated future uses by the community of the proposed service being offered by the applicant; and (7) the type of information services to be provided by the applicant over N11 and its relative value to the public and local community.<sup>2</sup>

On July 21, 2000, the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") granted a petition filed by certain information and referral service providers,<sup>3</sup> including United Way of America, for assignment of the abbreviated dialing code 211 for access to community information and referral services.<sup>4</sup> In assigning the abbreviated dialing code 211 for access to community information and referral services, the FCC found that the proposal submitted by the petitioners met the "public interest" standards for assignment of N11 codes which the FCC established in its *N11 First Report and Order*.<sup>5</sup> The FCC specifically found in the *Third Report and Order*:

Individuals facing serious threats to life, health, and mental well being have urgent and critical human needs that are not addressed by dialing 911 for emergency assistance or 311 for non-emergency police assistance. . . . We believe that the Information and Referral Petitioners have shown a public need exists for an easy to use, easy to remember N11 code to efficiently bring community information and referral services to those who need them, providing a national safety network for persons to get access readily to assistance. Therefore, we find that the public interest standard has been met.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See *In re: Investigation of N11 Allocations*, TPSC Interim Order, Docket No. 92-13892, pp. 4-5 (October 20, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> These providers included the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems, the United Way of America, United Way 211 (Atlanta, Georgia), United Way of Connecticut, Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services, Inc. and the Texas I&R (Information and Referral) Network. *Third Report and Order*, at ¶ 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Third Report and Order*, ¶ 49. Abbreviated dialing codes (including '211') enable the caller to connect to a location in the network that otherwise would be accessible only via a seven or ten-digit telephone number. *Third Report and Order*, at ¶ 3.

<sup>5</sup> See *In re: In the Matter of the Use of N11 Codes and Other Abbreviated Dialing Arrangements*, 1997 WL 68052, FCC 97-51, CC No. 92-105 (*First Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*) 12 F.C.C.R. 5572 (February 19, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> *Third Report and Order*, at ¶¶ 18-19.

## **United Way's Request**

United Way's Request seeks allocation of the 211 abbreviated dialing code in order to provide information and referral services through the First Call for Help Program to the City of Chattanooga and the surrounding region. The Authority submitted a data request to United Way on July 29, 2002, requesting information necessary to determine whether United Way met the criteria for allocation of the requested N11 code. United Way filed a response to the data request on February 26, 2003.

## **Findings and Conclusions**

The Authority finds that reliance on the criteria set forth in the TPSC Interim Order does not conflict with the FCC's national assignment of the 211 abbreviated dialing code and that these criteria continue to be instructive as the Authority carries out its role of making local assignments.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, the Authority finds that United Way's Request satisfies the criteria as follows:

**1. Overall financial fitness, both historical and future:** United Way began as the Community Chest in 1922. United Way has provided to the Authority the annual audit statements for 2000 and 2001. For the year ending December 31, 2001, United Way's assets were \$34,438,013 while United Way liabilities were \$9,597,906. Unrestricted net assets were \$14,423,573.00, temporarily restricted net assets were \$8,916,534 and permanently restricted net assets were \$1,500,000. United Way states that an endowment was established to offset the administrative costs and provide financial stability for the organization. United Way also states that over the lifetime of the organization it has been and will continue to be financially solvent.

**2. Overall technical ability and willingness to provide service on a permanent and continuous basis:** United Way states that its First Call for Help Program uses a database which includes over 400 agencies and 900 programs providing social and human services in United Way's sixteen-county service area. United Way has also pointed out that the First Call for Help program

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<sup>7</sup> This finding is consistent with the Authority's finding in TRA Docket No. 02-00126, *Order Approving Allocation of N11 Number (211) to Contact Ministries, Inc.* (May 13, 2002) and TRA Docket No. 02-00127, *Order Approving Allocation of N11 Number (211) to Contact-Concern of Northeast Tennessee, Inc.* (June 10, 2002).

uses BellSouth service and that the program's telephone equipment has the ability to rotate calls among resource managers and give waiting callers the option to hold or leave a message.

**3. Ability and willingness to comply with any applicable Authority rules and policies:**

United Way provided a statement that it will follow the Authority's rules and policies.

**4. The rates, services and collection practices to be utilized by the service provider in providing N11 service:** United Way states that there will not be a charge for its services offered through the First Call for Help program.

**5. The extent and duration of the applicant's service to the local community included in the N11 calculation:** United Way states that the First Call for Help Program has been providing information and referral services to the Chattanooga area for the past twenty years. The program originated as the Community Info Line but the name was later changed for consistency with the trademark name controlled by the United Way of America for information and referral services. The First Call for Help Program became a part of the United Way's Center for Nonprofits in July, 1999. United Way stated that the First Call for Help program received over 26,000 calls in 2002 from its sixteen-county service area. United Way proposes initially to provide the 211 service for the counties of Hamilton and Rhea.

**6. Anticipated future uses by the community of the proposed service and the provider's overall experience in providing information to this community:** United Way states that the 211 designation will allow for the expansion of its existing service to a broader client base. United Way anticipates that future uses of the service will include its using the 211 service to assist in the recruitment and replacement of volunteers for local nonprofits and to provide a clearinghouse for donations. United Way is also developing a plan, along with local emergency management agencies, for providing information and referral services in the event of a disaster.

**7. The type of information services to be provided over N11 and its relative value to the public and local community:** United Way states that its First Call for Help program provides

information regarding social and human services, and helps clients find assistance with utility payments, food vouchers, child care, support groups and many other needs. The First Call for Help program also assists nonprofit, faith-based and government agencies by screening clients and sending them to the appropriate place for the help they need, thereby saving both the client and agency valuable time and resources. The First Call for Help program also provides clearing house activities for the entire local community through the Christmas Clearance, a program designed to insure that families are connected with appropriate groups and agencies in order to receive gifts for family members.


Based upon careful consideration of the Request, United Way's responses to the Authority's data requests, and the criteria set forth in the TPSC Interim Order, the Directors voted unanimously to approve allocation of the 211 abbreviated dialing code to United Way of Greater Chattanooga.

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:**

The Request of United Way of Greater Chattanooga seeking allocation of the 211 abbreviated dialing code to provide information and referral services to the City of Chattanooga and the surrounding region is approved.

  
Deborah Taylor Tate, Director

  
Pat Miller, Director

  
Ron Jones, Director